

Notice of Allowability	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/623,023	HASHIMOTO ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Susy N Tsang-Foster	1745	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTO-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. This communication is responsive to the amendment filed on 7/30/2004.
2. The allowed claim(s) is/are 9,13,14 and 17-19.
3. The drawings filed on _____ are accepted by the Examiner.
4. Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) All
 - b) Some*
 - c) None
 of the:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.
THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

5. A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
6. CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) hereto or 2) to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.

Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
7. DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08),
Paper No./Mail Date _____
4. Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit
of Biological Material
5. Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6. Interview Summary (PTO-413),
Paper No./Mail Date 20040922.
7. Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. Other _____.

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Gerhard Thielman on 22 September 2004.

Drawings

2. The following changes to the drawings have been approved by the examiner and agreed upon by applicant:

Applicants' proposed drawing changes to Figures 1 and 5 submitted on July 30, 2004 are approved by the Examiner.

In order to avoid abandonment of the application, applicant must make these above agreed upon drawing changes by submitting formal drawings for Figures 1 and 5.

Allowable Subject Matter

3. Claims 9, 13, 14, 17-19 are allowed.
4. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

Claims 13, 14, and 17 are allowed for the cumulative reasons of record.

Claims 9, 18 and 19 are allowed because the closest prior art of record, JP 06-052881 (Shimozu), as pointed out by applicants in the amendment filed on 6/19/2003, discloses a solid electrolyte fuel cell assembly that is composed of cell frame portion 6 in the form of a square flat plate and a plurality of unit cells 1 assembled with the cell frame portion 6 in such a manner that the adjacent unit cells 1 are arranged to be connected with each other in different polarity. Specifically, Shimozu teaches that unit cells 1 are each composed of a solid electrolyte membrane 4 (see especially Figure 19 of Shimozu) and a pair of electrodes 2 and 3 placed in contact with opposite surfaces of the electrolyte membrane 4, and a current-collecting plate 5 is assembled in contact with each electrode 3 of the unit cells 1. See paragraph (0016) and Figs. 1 and 2 of Shimozu.

In contrast with the fuel cell assembly of Shimozu, the fuel cell as provided in the claimed features is characterized by the plurality of divided electrode plates placed in contact with the single electrolyte member and two separators each comprising an insulation plate and conductive projections placed in contact with the divided electrode plates at one side thereof and in contact with the divided current-collecting plates at the other side thereof.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications should be directed to examiner Susy Tsang-Foster, Ph.D. whose telephone number is (571) 272-1293. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday from 9:30 AM to 6:00 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Patrick Ryan can be reached at (571) 272-1292.

The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

st/ *Susy Tsang Foster*

Susy Tsang-Foster
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1745